

CRC QUERI AFFILIATES FORUM

SCREEN Study Gets Underway

One of the CRC QUERI's newest projects, Assessing and Addressing Patient Colorectal Cancer Screening Barriers, locally known as the *SCREEN* (Survey of ColoRectal Cancer Education and Environmental Needs) Study began funding in July 2005. Melissa Partin, PhD, is the Principal Investigator on this 2.5 year patient survey study designed to inform the development of effective patient-directed interventions to increase colorectal cancer (CRC) screening among veterans age 50 and older.

The specific primary objectives of this study are to: (1) estimate the relative effect of patient cognitive (knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy), environmental (social network and medical care characteristics), and background (demographics, health status, prior screening experiences) factors on CRC screening behavior; (2) identify factors that contribute to any disparities in CRC screening behavior by race/ethnicity or other patient characteristics; and (3) identify from these analyses priority population subgroups and priority factors to target in future interventions.

This is an observational study based on a nationally representative, cross-sectional mailed survey of 4,030 male and female veterans age 50-75 that have had one or more primary care visits at a VA Medical facility in the past two years. Currently, the SCREEN Study team is actively working on refining the questionnaire. The mailed patient questionnaire, will consist primarily of previously validated measures and will include measures of self-reported CRC screening behavior; patient demographic, health, social network and medical care characteristics; CRC screening knowledge, preferences, attitudes, social norms and self-efficacy; and attitudes toward medical care. Additional measures of organizational-level CRC screening practices from a recently completed VA facility survey will be linked to the patient survey. A pilot test of the questionnaire, including a validation of self-reported screening behavior, will be conducted on approximately 200 veterans in early February 2006. Mailing of the production survey is scheduled to begin mid-summer 2006.

The products anticipated from this study (recommendations regarding the most fruitful patient and system directed strategies for promoting CRC screening in the VA, recommendations for developing culturally competent and sensitive CRC screening promotion strategies, and validated measures of CRC screening behavior and knowledge) will greatly facilitate future efforts to monitor and improve CRC screening rates in the VA.

Article submitted by Krysten Halek, MA, Project Manager, Minneapolis VAMC. For more information about this study contact Krysten at krysten.halek@va.gov.

Research Seminar Series to Feature Dr. Laura Kochevar

Laura Kochevar, PhD will be our featured QUERI research seminar speaker on Tuesday, November 22, 2005 at 2:00 – 3:30 PM EDT. Dr. Kochevar will present an overview of "The CRC Collaborative Quality Assessment and Improvement Pilot Project".

The Colorectal Cancer Care Initiative is a joint effort with HSR&D, OQO, ACA, DUSHOM and PCS. It is designed to identify methods for assessing and improving colorectal cancer diagnosis and treatment. Successful measurement strategies identified in this pilot project will be made available to all VHA facilities, and successful improvement strategies will be shared throughout the VA system. Dr. Kochevar is the Research Coordinator for the CRC QUERI. She received

her PhD in Experimental Psychology/Medical Decision Making from the University of Minnesota in 1994.

Affiliates Forum

is a quarterly publication of the CRC QUERI

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Get to Know Our Affiliates *Adam Powell, PhD*

Adam Powell, PhD, was recently hired as Implementation Research Coordinator and has been working at the QUERI since August 8, 2005. The task of the Implementation Research Coordinator is to be responsible for the oversight of QUERI implementation efforts. For example, the IRC works with investigators to design studies so that the results are applicable in the field. The IRC also designs implementation programs based on recent research findings.

Dr. Powell received his PhD in Social Psychology from the University of Kansas and also has an MBA in marketing research. Prior to coming to the QUERI, Dr. Powell worked in the private sector for 10 years, where he led marketing research efforts primarily focused on the identification and development of new product ideas. He believes that there is similarity between new product development and implementation research, as both situations require target individuals (whether they be patients, providers or consumers) to embrace behavior change. In the long run, the determination of which innovations are accepted or rejected is based both on the cognitive perception of benefit and the innovation's association with positive affect.



The central theme of Dr. Powell's research interests involves the application of theories of social influence and social emotion to induce long-term behavior change. Much of his previous work has examined how the framing of communications can affect emotional responses such as empathy and guilt and how these responses can in turn affect attitudes and behaviors. Recently, Dr. Powell has also become interested in the implications underlying patient choice; most specifically the affect that multiple options have upon the process of decision making.

The goals of researchers and end users of healthcare innovations are not always aligned. As CRC QUERI's Implementation Research Coordinator, Dr. Powell sees serving as an intermediary between these two stakeholders as an important aspect of his job. Good implementation research must contribute to theory and be publishable but it also must identify process improvements that are cost effective, practically implementable, and provide positive outcomes to providers as well as patients. Dr. Powell is looking forward to the challenge of bringing these two perspectives more closely together.

Colorectal Cancer Care Collaborative Kicks Off

Noting the need to reduce the time from positive screening test to diagnosis and increase the use of guideline concordant care, the CRC-QUERI, VA Office of Quality and Performance, and VA Advanced Clinic Access (ACA) Initiative have partnered to conduct the Colorectal Cancer Care Collaborative (C4). C4 includes improvement teams representing one facility from each of the 21 VISNs. Successful strategies developed by the teams will be disseminated VA wide.

The first face-to-face learning session for the collaborative was held September 22-23 in Las Vegas. The focus of this session was phase 1 of the collaborative – concentrating on reducing the period of time from positive CRC screening or patient presentation to diagnosis. Phase 2, which focuses on improving quality of treatment, will begin next year.

Team members, collaborative coaches, and C4 planning committee members discussed issues including the state of the art in CRC diagnosis, ACA quality improvement principles, rapid cycle improvement techniques, mapping the care process, measuring clinic demand, and use of measures developed by the CRC QUERI coordinating center. There were also extensive opportunities for team members to learn from each other's experiences.

Laura Kochevar, Ph.D., CRC QUERI Research Coordinator, and Dawn Provenzale, MD, MS, CRC QUERI Co-Clinical Coordinator, are leading the QUERI C4 effort. Both were on the faculty for the face-to-face learning session.

Article submitted by George L. Jackson, PhD, Research Health Scientist, Durham VAMC.
